

"BUT THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE,
THEN PEACEABLE"

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The Orthodox Pupil

vs.

The Unorthodox Teacher

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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

The Orthodox Student vs. The Unorthodox Teacher

Toronto, 29th March, 1909.

My Dear Brother,—I have received and thought a great deal over your letter of the 19th inst.

I ask your acceptance of a book that I now send you by post, which I have read with the greatest pleasure and profit, "The Bible Under Trial," by James Orr, D.D. May it be so helpful to you as that you may be able, with the author, gladly to say of our Bible as it stands to-day, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

I have not time to reply to all the letters that I have received containing complaints of the teaching given by those who "sit in Moses's seat," "but have made the Word of God of none effect."

You will, therefore, excuse me if, while I deal with your difficulty, I also take up some other points that have been presented.

You ask my attention to one of the text-books which is prescribed for you in your course of study for the ministry, namely, "The Life of Christ," by Burton & Matthews (Constructive Studies); and you say as to this, "I have been impressed by the amount of what I consider 'Higher Criticism' that I find there." But this should not surprise you, for this book has the endorsement of "The University of Chicago," which Uni-

versity gives its imprimatur to a work of Professor G. B. Foster on "The Finality of the Christian Religion," in which it is declared at page 130 that to the scientific understanding of the world, and to the intellectual attitude superinduced by science, a miracle cannot be admitted; and again, at page 132, where the anti-supernaturalistic principle is not only admitted, but is paraded, and a man is said not to be a "modern" who does not admit it, Prof. Foster affirms, "An intelligent man who now affirms his faith in such stories (marvellous narratives like the Bible) as actual facts can hardly know what intellectual honesty means."

So that you perceive from other books which have the authority of this University that the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus is not to be accepted. You may possibly in due course be led to this book, but in the meantime you refer to page 269 of the text-book, which you are obliged to study, where this comment on verse 33, of chapter xv. of the Gospel of St. Mark is found:

"And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour." On which the comment is: "Darkness; if taken literally, it was probably due to a storm of sand. . . . But probably the phrase in its origin is metaphorical." There is no more reason to think that this is metaphorical than that the fact of the crucifixion itself was a mere metaphor. Even as children, we learned that God hung the world in mourning when the creature crucified the Creator. It was fitting and proper that this should be done. Do you continue to believe it as God's miracle to call the attention of the world, at that time assembled in Jerusalem, to the depth of the crime committed. Second, you call attention to the belittling of

the mode in which God called the attention of all to the fact that Jesus Christ was the new and living way into the Holy of Holies. It was intended to strike home to the mind of a Jew the great truth beyond any other means that could be presented. The Jew might well stand awestruck at the rending of the heavy veil and the throwing open to the gaze of all that which for centuries was regarded as too sacred a place to be entered but once in the year, and that by the High Priest alone, and then not without blood.

To say that "This rather than a physical fact is perhaps all that the words should be taken to mean," is without any warrant whatever. These two instances to which you refer are simply illustrations of the determination of those who are introducing the new Bible to drive away everything that savours of the miraculous.

Pay no attention to the statements of the Higher Critics "that certain words are *apparently* an addition to the original narrative, etc." He says it is "apparently" so to him. But in all such cases take my advice and thankfully accept the text that has stood for all these centuries rather than the suggestions of some new light.

It would be difficult to find anyone who had a deeper knowledge of the Bible and impossible to find anyone who was more wonderfully blest in its use than the late John Wesley. It may be helpful to you to read this quotation from his preface to his explanatory notes of the Bible printed for the "Wesleyan Methodist Book-room":

"Concerning the Scriptures in general, it may be observed, the word of the living God, which directed the first patriarchs also, was, in the time of Moses, com-

mitted to writing. To this were added, in several succeeding generations, the inspired writings of the other prophets. Afterwards, what the Son of God preached, and the Holy Ghost spake by the apostles, the apostles and evangelists wrote. This is what we now style the Holy Scripture. This is that 'Word of God which remaineth forever,' of which, though 'heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall not pass away.' The Scripture, therefore, of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom, which they who are able to taste, prefer to all writings of men, however, wise, or learned, or holy."

"An exact knowledge of the truth was accompanied, in the inspired writers, with an exactly regular series of arguments, a precise expression of their meaning, and a genuine vigour of suitable affections."

"In the language of the sacred writings we may observe the utmost depth, together with the utmost ease, all the elegancies of human composures sink into nothing before it: God speaks not as man, but as God. His thoughts are very deep, and hence his words are of inexhaustible virtue. And the language of his messengers also is exact in the highest degree, for the words which were given them accurately answered the impression made upon their minds; and hence Luther says, 'Divinity is nothing but a grammar of the language of the Holy Ghost.' To understand this thoroughly we should observe the emphasis which lies on every word, the holy affections expressed thereby, and the tempers

shown by every writer. But how little are these, the latter especially, regarded!"

Be ashamed of yourself if, while claiming to be a disciple of this honoured name, and to belong to the society of which he is the founder, you are false to those great principles on which it was founded, and are untrue to the Word of God on which Wesley built.

But, you will say, Did John Wesley know of the wonderful teachings of "new light," "modern thought," "common sense," "rational views"? Did he know of the infirmities of Genesis, the mistakes of Moses, the childishness of the story of Jonah? And had he recognized that a belief in miracles was a sure mark of superstition to be at once rejected by anyone that pretended to intellectual power?

Why, John Wesley lived in the very centre of this atmosphere when, as one of the "Bible moths" in his Oxford days, he was the perpetual object of attack, ridicule and obloquy by the smart, clever infidel set of the 18th century. He was a contemporary of Thomas Paine, with his "Age of Reason" and "Common Sense," and of Voltaire and Volney.

Thomas Paine, after writing his essay on "Common Sense," applied this faculty to the composition of the "Age of Reason," being an investigation of "true and fabulous theology," stating that "It contains my opinion about religion. The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall." I do not advise you to read this book. I read it many years ago, and have re-read it this week, having it in my mind that the infidel attacks of the 20th Century simply went over the old ground covered by like attacks of the 18th century;

the difference being that the earlier writer wrote in a coarser vein, and that those of the 20th century, for the present at least, "walk softly" lest they should frighten people by the openness of their attacks, and therefore do they more guardedly, but equally certainly, dishonour the Word of God. Let me give you a few quotations from the "Age of Reason," to show the truth of my statement as to the similarity of the infidel writings of the 18th and 20th centuries:

"It is certain that what is called the Christian system of Faith, including in it the whimsical account of the Creation—the strange story of Eve—the snake and the apple—the ambiguous idea of a man-God—the corporeal idea of the death of a God—the mythological idea of a family of Gods, and the Christian system of arithmetic that three are one, and one is three, are all irreconcilable, not only to the divine gift of reason that God has given to man, but to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom of God by the aid of the sciences and by studying the structure of the universe that God has made."

So that you see that in the 18th century there were the attacks of so-called science as to the accuracy of the Bible, and the Christian was invited to exercise his Common Sense in accepting or rejecting its statements. In fact, Thomas Paine shortly puts the matter, "My own mind is my own church." Again:

"The setters up, therefore, and the advocates of the Christian faith could not but foresee that the continually progressive knowledge that man would gain, by the aid of science, of the power and wisdom of God manifested in the structure of the universe and in all the works of

creation would militate against, and call into question, the truth of their system of faith, etc.”

“As to the account of the Creation,” Paine says, “the manner in which the account opens shows it to be traditionary.”

“I believe that any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system. Instead, therefore, of admitting the recitals of miracles as evidence of any system of religion being true, they ought to be considered as symptoms of its being fabulous.

“I proceed to examine the authenticity of the Bible, and I begin with what are called the five books of Moses—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. My intention is to show that those books are spurious, and that Moses is not the author of them; and, still further, that they were not written in the time of Moses, nor till several hundred years after.” How faithfully the infidelity of the 20th century has followed that of the 18th. Paine puts shortly that with which the like writers of the 20th century have filled libraries.

“Take away from Genesis the belief that Moses was the author, on which only the strange belief that it is the Word of God has stood, and there remains nothing of Genesis but an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies. The story of Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian tales without the merit of being entertaining; and the account of men living to eight or nine hundred years becomes as fabulous as the immortality of the giants of the mythology.”

I wonder if it has struck you how absurd is the claim made by these men as to the "wider knowledge," the "enlarged view," etc., etc., that they are supposed to give Bible readers. Why they begin by seeking to take away principal portions of it to limit our view and to darken our knowledge? They say that what they take away is not necessary to it. God thought otherwise when he gave it to us. He gave us the "a quo" in the first chapters of Genesis when he related the first Creation, and He gave us the "ad quem" when He told us of its passing away and the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth." What a magnificent structure we have, with such a beginning and such a closing! It should be considered as high treason to mankind to seek to deprive us of any portion of that wondrous Book which thus begins and thus ends. Remember that they seek to replace God's Word with a cold man-made story—nothing supernatural—no Messianic prophecies—no miracles—no vicarious suffering; a mass of uncertainties, myths, legends, allegories, poetry, with an occasional grain of wheat if your common sense can find it, leading up to cold Unitarianism or Socinianism.

The truth of this can almost be universally ascertained by leading these destroyers of our faith to I. Peter, 2-24, "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree," and asking them, without sophistry, without casuistry, without Jesuitical deceit, without mental reservation, will you give your unfeigned assent to this Divine Doctrine of substitution, "So help me God"?

I want you to read especially in Dr. Orr's book, from page 147 onwards, "The Citadel—Christ": "Only folly could imagine that it was possible to stand

permanently with an advanced liberal leg in the Old Testament and a conservative leg in the New." As Prof. Schmidt puts it, "The movement could not stop at the Old Testament." Again, a word or two from a pamphlet by Prof. Julius Kaftan, of Berlin: "You claim to be applying an historical method. In reality your procedure has not its roots in method at all. What lies behind it is the so-called 'modern view of the world.' This being pre-supposed, the view of Christ and Christianity has to be clipped down to suit at whatever expense to the History. The new procedure means this: We will know the History not as it is or was, but as it ought to be according to our presuppositions, according to the presuppositions of our modern view of the world."

And he declares "that to this mode of treatment the believing community will never adapt itself. It will feel itself to be an apostasy from faith. And this feeling which it has is thoroughly justified in fact." You will mark also the statement of a negative writer, Weinel: "After Jesus there is either His religion or no religion."

But I must now take up another letter, which deals with the question, how has this state of matters come about in our Christian city, and whence is the source of this evil, and to what extent has it proceeded? It is now a good many years since Dr. Workman, who is a graduate of Victoria College, taught and wrote upon Higher Criticism. With the specious plea that he was defending, he attacked the Bible under the title of "The Old Testament Vindicated." This met with the approval of the head of that institution. On the Senate of Knox College there are Dr. McCurdy, Prof.

McFayden, Dr. Eakin and Prof. Davidson. These same gentlemen have an open door in the University. "By their fruits ye shall know them." When the Rev. Geo. Jackson delivered an address in the Central Y. M. C. A., Toronto, in February last, which was the subject of strong comment, Dr. Eakin stated:

"I was very much surprised at the criticism of Mr. Jackson and at the storm that has been raised. I was under the impression that a great many people accepted the views he expressed, and I believe that most of the younger people do think that way and are ready for the new view of the Bible."

Of course, the critic begins with the usual fling at Genesis, although he forgets to mention that 1,500 years ago the Saintly Saint Augustine dealt with the "Days" to the satisfaction of sober-minded, honest people.

On page 2:

"There is probably no part of the Bible which presents so many and seemingly insuperable difficulties as the earlier Chapters of the Book of Genesis."

"It is, indeed, hardly less than cruel to allow young men and women to grow up in the belief that those Chapters are literal history."

And again: "If, therefore, the Church is to have any Gospel for such as these, if she is to keep the sons she had, and recover those whom she has lost, she must learn to re-state her faith in terms that will not clash with that wider knowledge into which the Author of all Truth is to-day leading men."

On page 3:

“It has somehow to be made plain that those Chapters (the earlier Chapters of Genesis) are not science and are not history, and consequently the student must not be surprised—nay, he must expect—to find in them many things with which neither science nor history can be made to agree.”

Again, referring to these Chapters, he states:

“They contain no account of the real beginning either of the earth itself or of man and human civilization upon it.”

To the millions of humble Bible readers who gladly accept the only history we have of these matters, what blasphemous impertinence is conveyed in words which to us teach that the great Creator, the Omniscient One, did not give to us correctly the details of the work of creation carried on by Himself!

And at page 8: “When, however, not content with this, we go on to claim that the secrets which the mind of man is slowly spelling out from the rocks and the stars were revealed to the writers of Genesis centuries ago, science simply laughs us to scorn.”

Page 11: “How, then, is the difficulty to be met? It is to be met by once more frankly admitting that these early Chapters of Genesis contain not history, but tradition.”

But observe that in coolly following this infidel advice, you must not only abandon these early Chapters of Genesis, but also give up your New Testament, which has adopted them, and, speaking with all reverence, con-

vict the Lord of life and glory, the Light of the World, of mistake and misleading!

Listen to the cool assumption found on the eleventh page:

“On the story of the Fall it is not necessary to dwell, because even the most thorough-paced literalism hesitates to treat these picturesque details as sober prose.”

But what does the keen mind of Professor Huxley see in this?

“If the story of the Fall is only a type or an analogue what becomes of the foundation of Pauline Theology?”

The key to the whole Bible is found in this passage. It tells us of the Temptation; the Fall; the punishment; and, thank God, just as there came the great need, comes the promise of the unspeakable gift of the Saviour, who, in the fulness of time fulfilled the promise, was led away to Calvary, and through His bleeding wounds mercy and truth met together, and, as promised in Genesis, the seed of the woman paid the debt. No, the early Chapters of Genesis as seen and well stated by Professor Huxley, cannot go, unless you, with them, fling away our Bible as a discredited and lying document.

Again, on page 12, with the exquisite superciliousness with which the higher critic delights to treat the orthodox Christian, he proceeds:

“Probably no intelligent person now believes in a universal deluge which submerged the tops of the highest mountains over the whole earth, but even the substitution of a partial for a universal flood does not carry us far along the road to credibility.”

This is given as a fact in both Old and New Testament, and it is to be hoped that with this testimony, which has stood for nigh two thousand years, no intelligent person will disbelieve this statement and convict his Lord and Master of untruth.

But some sensible soul says, "If one part of my Bible is mythical, how do I know that any part is historical?"

"Most sensible question. Most perplexing position for the lecturer in respect of which the unfortunate is thus helped!"

"To which once more the simple answer is, we must use our common sense!"

A man must indeed be a "simple" one who would accept such an answer. What a substitute! The "common sense" in place of the revealed Word of God. Whose "common sense?" With the millions of standards thus presented, what part of our Bible will be left? What an impetus would this give to lawlessness, license, and anarchy throughout the world? The common sense so often represented by vagaries, whims, idiosyncracies, and ever-changing mental attitude of the reader affected by the state of the liver, and the state of the weather, are to transform the Word of God into anything or nothing, according to the sweet will of the reader!

What a marvel it is that this poor wanderer from God does not burn his lecture when on page 21 he pens this statement:

"Dr. Goldwin Smith takes for granted that, of course, inspiration can have no concord with myths; that when you admit the one you rule out the other."

Page 23: "On the other hand, the modern interpretation of the Old Testament completely cuts away the ground from under the feet of the secularist."

But is not this "a myth"? What ground is cut away? On the contrary, is not a firm and enlarged standing ground presented to the infidel, by the modern interpretation as shown in this lecture? What more does the infidel want?

The following extraordinary statement almost completes the lecture:

"It is a significant fact that neither Charles Bradlaugh, in England, nor Colonel Ingersoll, in America, has had any successor."

How amused these two gentlemen would be if they, revisiting the scenes of their labours, attended some of the lectures of the higher critics in the Toronto Y. M. C. A., and elsewhere, and perused their many volumes! How "significant" to them would be the fact that their labours were not thrown away, and that so-called ministers of God were playing Him false, and that schools and colleges rendered their presence unnecessary, as the work commenced by them was being so constantly, efficiently and thoroughly carried on by their ecclesiastical successors!

It is a still more "significant fact" what a wonderful resemblance the above teaching, sanctioned by Dr. Eakin, bears to the results that we find amongst our students and graduates who have had the disadvantage of his teaching!

One reason urged for preserving such teaching which should trouble every lover of our country is, that the

students thus instructed are to be throughout the length and breadth of our land the teachers in our public schools, and are to receive diplomas enabling them to continue to spread abroad the infidelity of this destructive criticism.

Truly, "the plague is begun." How is this plague to be "stayed"? There is no more live question in our Dominion to-day than is this.

It is not denied that this is the teaching we have in some of our colleges, and that the determination is to proceed with such instruction in order to educate those that are to be the teachers in our land to believe in and to present a mangled edition of the Bible. Remember, my dear friend, that these men do not seek to strengthen faith in the Bible, to build up their pupils in a reverence and love for it and an acceptance of it as God's Word. All the doubts, difficulties, uncertainties, objections, contradictions, imperfections, mistakes, that can be conjured up from minds that have been devoted to this one-sided study are presented. The views of people that do not know how to weigh evidence are given as conclusive.

If a man has his doubts as to the authenticity of the Bible as God's Word, he is to be deeply pitied, and is worthy of great sympathy. If with such doubts he spreads them abroad, pity should end in reproof; but if with such doubts he accepts the position of instructor of youth and spreads abroad the poison with which he is afflicted, he should be found guilty of treason against the State, which he is wounding in its most vital part.

I will further answer your letter when time permits.

Faithfully yours,

S. H. BLAKE.

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